

Shirl Storm

From: Melia Carter [melia88@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2010 6:08 PM
To: Julius Genachowski; Michael Copps; Robert McDowell; Mignon Clyburn; Meredith Baker
Subject: Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide letter to FCC on Docket #09-191
Attachments: MAADD - FCC NPRM net neutrality.doc

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Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide

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January 14, 2010

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: GN Docket No. 09-191

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

Founded in 2003, the Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD) is a 25,000+ member next generation civil rights organization devoted to bridging the digital divide and promoting personal and economic development in low income and minority communities across the country. Since its inception, MAADD has fought to encourage corporations and government agencies to implement policies that promote broadband investment and competition for consumers in the underserved communities that need it most.

On behalf of our members and the more than 100,000 parishioners represented by the 255 clergy from all over the nation that have signed below, we are writing to insure that the FCC comb through the clutter of comments presented by the special interests and act in a manner that will bring this nation closer to achieving 100% broadband deployment and the elimination of the Digital Divide.

As we have mentioned in previous comments to the FCC, it is MAADD's belief that the "net neutrality" debate has nothing to do with the issue of free and open access to the Internet. We see no evidence that a problem exists. This issue appears to be a fear mongering tactic put forth by multi-billion dollar corporations to cover up their real motivation, which is to protect huge corporate profits at the expense of consumers. In our opinion, other than the need to provide incentives for more state of the art broadband investment and the need to promote programs that provide people with computers and computer literacy training, there is nothing wrong with the current state of the Internet. Thus, we feel that this rulemaking is nothing more than a solution looking for a problem.

Low income and minority communities are currently on the right path towards achieving universal broadband adoption. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, households with annual incomes below \$30,000 experienced a 34% growth in home broadband adoption from 2008 to 2009. Furthermore, African Americans are the most



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active and fastest growing users of the mobile Internet, with 48% of African Americans using mobile devices compared to the national average of 32%. When mobile use is taken into account, the digital divide between African Americans and white Americans is much smaller and closing faster than ever before. If our nation stays on this path, we could see the extinction of the digital divide in just a few short years.

This success story has only occurred because current policies in the wireless and broadband markets have propelled competition and investment. This in turn has led to increased availability and reduced prices, making broadband access more affordable for low income and minority households. Furthermore, we are already seeing that innovations such as the smartphone are playing a role in promoting broadband adoption among these groups. With the continued advancement of affordable technology, broadband adoption will only accelerate – leading our nation closer to the goal of universal broadband.

Therefore, we strongly discourage the FCC from setting any rules that would upset this progress towards achieving 100% broadband access and the elimination of the Digital Divide. As the old saying goes, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” America is so close to the day when technology can give every individual the freedom of opportunity. Onerous rules that hamper investment and innovation will only cause that dream to slip away.

Sincerely,

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